

Message Text

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12
ACTION NEA-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PK
SUBJ: POLITICAL OPPOSITION CALLS FOR "MOVEMENT" AGAINST
REGIME

REF: KARACHI 1545, LAHORE 0994, ISLAMABAD 6137 AND 6439.

SUMMARY. UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT AUGUST 23 ANNOUNCED ITS
MOVEMENT AGAINST BHUTTO GOVERNMENT WOULD BEGIN AUGUST 24
AND FRONT WOULD SIMULTANEOUSLY ENTTER INTO FLOOD RELIEF
EFFORTS. BALUCHISTAN OPPOSITION WILL, HOWEVER,
IN APPARENT LAST MINUTE DECISION, NOT PARTICIPATE.
GOP LEADERS HAVE DENOUNCED FRONT PLANS IN STRONG
LANGUAGE. DOUBTFUL THAT UDF WILL GENERATE MUCH PUBLIC
INTEREST OR SUPPORT IN ITS "MOVEMENT" GIVEN PREOCCUPATION
IN PUNJAB AND SIND WITH FLOOD PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

1. AFTER FOUR DAY MEETING IN LAHORE, OPPOSITION UDF
ACTION COMMITTEE AGREED AUGUST 23 TO IMPLEMENT EARLIER
DECISION (ISLAMABAD 6137) TO LAUNCH "CONTINUING MOVEMENT"
AGAINST BHUTTO GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVE AUGUST 24. HOWEVER, IN
RECOGNITION OF DISASTEROUS FLOODS IN SIND AND POST-FLOOD HAVOC
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IN PUNJAB, UDF WISELY PROPOSED TWO PRONGEDPROGRAM CONSISTING OF

FLOOD RELIEF EFFORT AND ONLY SECONDARILY OF "DAUNTLESS STRUGGLE", A "CONSTITUTIONAL" NON-VIOLENT, AND PEACEFUL MOVEMENT". UDF IN CONVENTIONAL PAK POLITICAL PRACTICE ISSUED 11 POINT DEMANDS, INCREASE OF FOUR OVER THOSE ADOPTED BY SAME GROUP IN LAHORE IN JULY.

2. CONFUSION IN UDF RANKS EVIDENT WHEN BALUCHISTAN NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY RECOMMENDED POSTPONEMENT OF "MOVEMENT" BECAUSE OF FLOODS (KARACHI REFTEL) ONLY TO REVERSE ITSELF LATER. (BALUCHISTAN PARTICIPATION IN MOVEMENT WAS ULTIMATELY POSTPONED AUGUST 23 BECAUSE OF FURTHER ARRESTS OF NAP LEADERS IN THAT PROVINCE.) MOREOVER, UDF DID NOT ADOPT NAP CALL FOR GANDHIAN "CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE" CAMPAIGN, BUT OPTED FOR MILER "CONTINUING MOVEMENT" LANGUAGE. UDF, AS WHOLE, APPARENTLY NOT PREPARED AT THIS TIME, DESPITE ARRESTS IN BALUCHISTAN, TO GO BEYOND ITS HERETOFORE UNSUCCESSFUL TACTICS IN CHALLENGING BHUTTO GOVERNMENT.

3. ELEVEN DEMANDS SURFACED AT RECENT LAHORE MEETING WERE: (A) CHECK IN INFLATION AND LAWLESSNESS; (B) CURTAILMENT OF POLICIES "JEOPARDIZING NATIONAL INTEGRITY"; (C) RESTORATION OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS; (D) RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS; (E) HALT TO NEWSPAPER CURBS; (F) CESSATION OF PROPAGANDA IN GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MEDIA; (G) CONCESSION OF DEMANDS OF WORKERS, PEASANTS, AND STUDENTS; (H) IMPLEMENTATION OF ISLAMIC PROVISIONS OF CONSTITUTION; (I) RESTORATION OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENTS IN BALUCHISTAN AND NWFP; (J) REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION TO FLOOD VICTIMS; AND (K) PROHIBITION OF "DRINKING, SEXUAL LAXITY AND GAMBLING". IN ADDITION TO TIRED GRAB-BAG OF DEMANDS, UDF CHARGED THAT BALUCH LEADERS HAD BEEN ARRESTED BY GOP IN ORDER TO FORCE MILITANT LEADERS AND STUDENTS TO RESORT TO VIOLENCE. UDF ALSO CHARGED THAT PROBLEMS IN NWFP WERE EXACERBATED BY LARGE-SCALE ARRESTS IN MALAKAND AND KHYBER AGENCIES AND BY TENSIONS CREATED IN NORTH AND SOUTH WAZIRISTAN. UDF STATED THAT AT FRIDAY PRAYERS AUGUST 24 PRAYERS WOULD BE OFFERED TO RID "COUNTRY OF VISITATIONS WHICH HAVE TAKE DIVERSE FORMS RANGING FROM COMING INTO POWER OF PRESENT REGIME TO THE INUNDATION OF LARGE PARTS OF COUNTRY IN UNPRECEDENTED FLOODS".

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4. DESPITE PREOCCUPATION WITH FLOODS, INCLUDING SPEECHMAKING IN FLOODED AREAS, NUMBER OF CENTRAL MINISTERS, AS WELL AS BHUTTO, HAVE ISSUED STERN WARNINGS TO OPPOSITION. GOVERNOR KHAR IN MULTAN THREATENED THAT CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE CAMPAIGN WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED IN PUNJAB. PRESIDENT ELAHI IN GUJRAT URGED OPPOSITION TO POSTPONE MOVEMENT WHICH COULD INTERFERE WITH FLOOD RELIEF. INTERIOR MINISTER QAIYUM IN TYPICALLY STRONG LANGUAGE THUNDERED THAT IF UDF LAUNCHED MOVEMENT "IT

WOULD GET THE MOST UNPLEASANT BUT RICHLY DESERVED SURPRISE OF THEIR LIFE" AND "THEY WILL BE CRUSHED WITH AN IRON HAND". BHUTTO ALSO LASHED OUT AT OPPOSITION ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS (LAHORE 977). IN STATEMENT NAWABSHAH AUGUST 23, BHUTTO SAID OPPOSITION THREATS CONSTITUTED ACTIONS AGAINST "HUMANITARIAN NORMS" DURING THIS DISASTER PERIOD. HE ADDED THAT "WE WILL FACE THEM IN A SUITABLE MANNER" IF OPPOSITION, DESPITE CURRENT CRITICAL SITUATION, INSISTED ON TEST OF STRENGTH WITH HIS GOVERNMENT. DAWN REPORTED AUGUST 23 THAT NWFP GOVERNMENT, FOR ONE, WAS TAKING PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES IN EVENT OF UDF MOVEMENT - SECTION 144 SUBSEQUENTLY IMPOSED IN PESHAWAR AND SWABI AREAS.

5. PERHAPS TO STEAL SOME OF UDF'S ARGUMENTS, PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS MINISTER PIRZADA ANNOUNCED AUGUST 20 THAT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND SENATE SUMMONED FOR JOINT SESSION BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 4 TO DEBATE CONTINUATION OF STATE OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY, AS REQUIRED BY CONSTITUTION. PIRZADA JUSTIFIED CONTINUATION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY ON USUAL GROUNDS THAT EMERGENCY STILL IN EFFECT IN INDIA.

6. COMMENT: EMBASSY CONTINUES TO DOUBT WHETHER UDF WITH ITS OLD AND SO FAR UNINSPIRING SLOGANS WILL ELICIT MUCH PUBLIC SUPPORT OR INTEREST, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF PREOCCUPATION WITH FLOOD PROBLEMS IN MANY AREAS OF PUNJAB AND SIND. AS CONGEN LAHORE HAS ALREADY REPORTED, PPP SEEMS DETERMINED TO MONOPOLIZE FOOD RELIEF WITH GOVERNMENTAL MACHINERY IN ITS CONTROL. UDF HAS IN OUR VIEW COMMITTED TACTICAL BLUNDER IN ANNOUNCING GO-AHEAD WITH ITS "MOVEMENT", EVEN IF LIP-SERVICE PAID TO FLOOD SITUATION. THAT IT DID SO PROBABLY REFLECTS CONCERN THAT CANCELLATION OR POSTPONEMENT WOULD BE INTERPRETED BY BHUTTO AS SIGN OF WEAKNESS IN FACE OF RECENT ARRESTS OF BALUCH

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LEADERS.
SOBER

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